

**Department of Justice**

U.S. Attorney's Office

District of Nevada

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, August 13, 2021

## **California Man Charged With Unemployment Insurance Benefits Fraud**

**LAS VEGAS, Nev.** – In a criminal complaint unsealed Thursday, a Stockton, California, man has been charged for allegedly using multiple California Employment Development Department (EDD) unemployment insurance benefits debit cards in other peoples' names without their authorization.

According to allegations in court documents, on September 20, 2020, Breon Dante Mims, 30, was stopped by Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department officers after he was observed smoking a marijuana blunt in public. During the stop, officers obtained Mims' consent to search his backpack, which revealed: (a) ten EDD debit cards, none of which were in Mims' name; (b) \$10,080 in cash; and (c) narcotics, including marijuana, ecstasy, and hydrocodone pills. Between August 19, 2020, and September 19, 2020, Mims allegedly withdrew at least \$77,000 from various ATMs in Nevada and California using these fraudulently obtained EDD debit cards. At least \$261,600 in benefits were approved for the unemployment claims associated with the cards.

Mims is charged with one count of illegal transaction with access devices issued to other persons and one count of aggravated identity theft. He made his initial court appearance yesterday before U.S. Magistrate Judge Elayna J. Youchah. If convicted, Mims faces a statutory maximum penalty of 17 years in prison.

Acting U.S. Attorney Christopher Chiou for the District of Nevada and Special Agent in Charge Quentin Heiden of the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General (DOL-OIG), Los Angeles Region made the announcement.

This case was investigated by DOL-OIG. Assistant U.S. Attorney Jim Fang is prosecuting the case.

In May, the Attorney General established the COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Task Force to marshal the resources of the Department of Justice in partnership with agencies across government to enhance efforts to combat and prevent pandemic-related fraud. The Task Force bolsters efforts to investigate and prosecute the most culpable domestic and international criminal actors and assists agencies tasked with administering relief programs to prevent fraud by, among other methods, augmenting and incorporating existing coordination mechanisms, identifying resources and techniques to uncover fraudulent actors and their schemes, and sharing and harnessing information and insights gained from prior enforcement efforts. For more information on the department's response to the pandemic, please visit <https://www.justice.gov/coronavirus>.

Anyone with information about allegations of attempted fraud involving COVID-19 can report it by calling the Department of Justice's National Center for Disaster Fraud Hotline at 866-720-5721 or via the NCDF web complaint form at: <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>.

A criminal complaint is merely an allegation. All defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

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**Topic(s):**

Coronavirus  
Financial Fraud  
Identity Theft

**Component(s):**

USAO - Nevada

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